

GOING THE *_social_* DISTANCE




Alumni Gill & Stephanie's Final Chapter Their Story Continued...

Pepsi was inspired by their story...

Our friends at Pepsi have offered a \$5,000 match to gifts made during the Going the Social Distance. The match lasts until April 30. Donate today and double the impact of your gift! You will be inspired throughout the month with more stories, next is an educator who has been instrumental with student success with innovative approaches with projects and programs.

Thank you for your support Pepsi!



Continue to read their story ... their inspiration is as refreshing as Pepsi's generous offer!



Since 2014, Major Marks Hendricks has applied and been awarded several grants made possible by the donors of the APS Education Foundation. He and Senior Chief Kirk Nicholson believes strongly that project-based learning is the key to academic success. His students learn through failure and develop a strong work ethic to get it right. Grants help equip the program with needed tools and supplies so students have access to the very resources

they will need should they choose a career in STEM. The largest grant awarded has been to fund the Mustang Makerspace, a place where students not only design, but fabricate the supplies they need for underwater robotics, rocketry, high-altitude ballooning, and more. Their enthusiasm is not contained to West Mesa High School, but these JROTC students also engage their younger peers and provide mentorship to students in middle school programs. Beyond that, the projects also develop resilience, dedication to teamwork, and so much more.

The instructors teach much more than you would expect in a JROTC program. Stephanie explains, *"As a whole, the Navy JROTC has helped prepare me for life after high school because we did career planning, and we also learned a lot of skills early on like budget management and time management."*

Gill goes on, *"The Navy JROTC helped me tremendously with my life after college. This is because it helped me figure out what I wanted to do. Everyone always says well if you go to the Navy JROTC you are going to have to go to the service. Well, that isn't true, and Major and Senior make this very clear. They are invested in whatever we want to do after high school. So, for our junior and senior year, Major has us do a plan for after we graduate. This is an actual assignment where we come up with a plan and stick with it throughout the year. This helped me figure out the steps I needed to take. It also helped me understand the importance of scholarships and grants."*

Gill and Stephanie graduated from West Mesa High School in 2018 and married. They both attend the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, where Stephanie is majoring in electrical engineering and Gill is majoring in computer science with the goal to build a career in cybersecurity. They both continue to support the students at West Mesa High School by working with Major Hendricks and Senior Chief Nicholson to students troubleshoot and develop new skills through their project-based learning (PBL).

The Carrillos know that the grants received by their Navy JROTC meant that donors believed in their potential. Stephanie adds, *"Investing in public education not only helps the current students. It helps the instructors because they also have to expand their field of knowledge, leading to better instructors. It also helps future students because they will have more resources to learn from (including instructors, materials, and the current students that can become mentors). The world is constantly evolving, so this means that our education system should as well. Most parents will tell you that they want the best for their kids, and they hope their kids will surpass them, and allowing kids exposure to what they are interested in is how that gets started."*

Gill writes, *"When you invest in public education it gives kids more opportunities to be engaged in a way that might have not been possible because of funds. This is important because students need time to figure out what they want to do, and high school goes quickly so engaging them and enlightening them will help them on their path in whatever way they decide to go."*

Gilbert and Stephanie Carrillo are definitely on a promising path now!

There are thousands of students who need opportunities made possible by the dedicated and innovative educators who apply for Foundation grants. Will you go the social distance by joining Pepsi in making a contribution today? The need is greater than ever! Pepsi will match your donation, dollar for dollar, up to \$5,000.



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GOING THE *_social_* DISTANCE


April 16-30

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